

Section II:

**4-H Programs
of Excellence
2001**

The Power of Youth in a Changing World

4-H Programs of Excellence reports for 2001 are organized using the major themes from the new 4-H Strategic Plan. If we really care about youth, if we really want them to succeed, we must reorganize around them. Ask yourself, “What does it take for youth to become fully engaged as valued partners? Am I not only providing leadership opportunities and gaining the unique perspectives of youth, but also transforming the relationships we have with youth in designing, delivering, and governing 4-H programs?”

Illinois

Youth Speakout

Situation:

Community groups struggle with the task of identifying, developing, and implementing an effective prevention program. This dilemma reflects the continuing recognition of youth program planners and the public that social problems like alcohol and drug use, teen pregnancy, lack of free-time options, lack of respect, school failure, violence, and others are not only inter-related but are also community-wide problems. Policymakers, advocates, and public and private sector organizations and foundations are also realizing the growing awareness of social problems being community problems. It is becoming evident that only community-wide solutions can solve these community-wide problems.

Program Description:

A Youth Speakout provides youth the opportunity to express their opinions, ideas, and concerns about the environment in which they live. The Speakout is a multi-tiered process that begins with a formal assessment of the youths’ concerns. The assessment questions are derived from a committee of both youth and adults who represent the community that will be served by the Speakout. A Speakout typically involves all school districts in a county.

Youth, usually ranging in ages of sophomores to seniors are selected by school administrators to serve as Youth Facilitators. Trainings provide the Facilitators the knowledge and process skills needed to assume “ownership” of the Speakout. Facilitators select the top four topics of concern that have been identified through the assessment process. These four topics form the foundation of the Speakout. They have included alcohol and drug use, lack of free-time options, lack of respect, violence, teen sex/pregnancy, concern of elevated junior high student risky behaviors, and others.

Youth from participating communities in the county are selected to attend an afternoon program in which the Facilitators lead discussions on the four topics identified. These participants are a cross section of the student body and include a balance by gender; by students who are in

leadership roles and those who are not; by racial, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds; by age and grade; and by students who are in college preparatory and those in vocational and general study programs. The Facilitators assist in identifying the student participants and work cooperatively with their school administration on the selection. The participants are divided into four discussion groups and rotate to each session to offer their thoughts on each topic. Adults are not allowed to attend these discussion group sessions. The Facilitators keep written records of the discussions and at the end of the sessions assemble the likenesses that were found and prioritize their findings.

The next phase of the Speakout is an open public forum with community leaders and citizens to hear the ideas, opinions, and recommendations that the youth have to offer. The forum provides the opportunity for youth and adults to converse in a positive manner in an attempt to provide solutions for making their communities a better place to grow and live.

Adults who typically attend the forum include county and school board members; government officials; local, county, and state law enforcement; clergy; business owners; school administrators and teachers; parents; legislators; and youth-serving agency personnel. Attendance by the adult audience has ranged from 30 to 300.

The final phase of the Speakout is a Community Action Plan. The Action Plan incorporates the results of the issues and concerns into specific recommendations. The Action Plan committee selects one to three of the topics and establishes working groups that provide direction to accomplish the identified recommendations.

Stakeholder Satisfaction:

The Youth Speakout has been offered for the past 6 years to approximately 40 counties (some multiple-use) and cities in Illinois. Each county has an educator or program assistant who provides support for the program. Both youth and adults have rated the program as “the best youth program that I have been involved in.” Due to the success and popularity of the program, a curriculum is being developed to be replicated throughout Illinois and other states.

Accomplishments and Impacts:

- Pre and post tests of approximately 190 Youth Facilitators have shown marked changes in behavior, perception, and knowledge of the following topics: 95% responded that they could serve as a Facilitator in another role, 90% responded that their public speaking skills had been increased, 88% responded that the Speakout would make a difference in their community, 85% responded that they could better discuss important topics with adults, and 73% responded that they had thought of possible careers in public administration, politics, or related fields due to the Youth Speakout.
- In each instance where the Speakout is held, community coalitions, which evolve into working collaborations, are formed due to the Action Plan phase. The coalitions are predominantly composed of “non-typical” Extension clientele as this program reaches “new” audiences.
- Approximately 2,650 youth facilitators and participants and 3,900 adults have attended the Youth Speakouts.

- A working collaboration has been established with the Department of Human and Community Development (HCD) on the campus of the University of Illinois. HCD professionals assist with the formal assessment, which includes distribution of the in-school survey, tabulation of the raw data, final dissemination of the data, and a formal publication of the findings.
- Examples of Action Plan accomplishments have included:
 - Development of mentoring programs that involve high school students receiving training so that they can serve as mentors for junior high students – issues include alcohol/drugs, violence, and respect.
 - A number of Youth Advisory Committees have been established that meet with local government officials (mayors) on a quarterly basis.
 - The State Journal Register, daily newspaper in Springfield, IL, with a circulation of 240,000, has developed and maintained (4 years) a section of their newspaper that targets teen issues and news. “The Voice” is published every Tuesday and was implemented due to the youths’ concern of negative press being given to them.
 - School boards have allowed a youth to have a “seat” on the board. These youth representatives have all rights of regular school board members with the exception of voting privileges.
 - Teen centers and alternative activity programs have been established in some counties.

Collaborators:

University of Illinois Extension, HCD – University of Illinois, Public Health Departments, Illinois State Police, local law enforcement, county and school boards, school administrators and teachers, local governments, churches, businesses, and other youth-serving agencies.

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Other Base Program Areas This Program Applies To:

Community Resources & Economic Development, Leadership & Volunteer Development, Family Development & Resource Management

Georgia

State Youth Summit

Situation:

Understanding the needs of youth in Georgia would enable the Cooperative Extension Service and 4-H to more effectively focus programs to meet the needs of this population as well as communicate youth needs to the Georgia Rural Development Council. Youth in Georgia also needed awareness of the opportunities in their communities. Improving our knowledge of the perceptions held by youth in rural parts of our state about their communities future would help us forecast the outlook for our state. Empowering youth to articulate and share their ideas about

how to improve the quality of life and opportunities for Georgia would benefit our entire population.

Program Description:

The Georgia Youth Summit, facilitated and led by 4-H in partnership with the Georgia Rural Development Council and Lieutenant Governor Mark Taylor was held September 9 - 11, 2001, at Rock Eagle 4-H Center in Eatonton, GA. The theme for the summit was “Engaging the Voices of Youth.” One hundred fifty-seven (of 159) Georgia counties selected youth and adult leaders to attend the conference on scholarship. A total of 720 youth delegates and 120 adults participated in the event.

A highlight of the Summit was the release of the executive summary findings of the “Engaging the Voices of Youth Survey” conducted by Georgia 4-H in partnership with the Georgia Rural Development Council. A total of 3,999 seventh and eighth graders from across the state of Georgia participated in the survey. This data was used as the foundation for the Youth Summit.

Youth attending the conference interacted with the Lieutenant Governor, school and civic leaders from throughout the state, elected officials, University of Georgia faculty, and the members of the Georgia Rural Development Council.

Stakeholder Satisfaction:

One state level faculty member coordinated the project at a level of 70% of their time. A steering team of agents, youth, and volunteers planned and facilitated the Summit. The target audience participated in either the survey or the Summit and engaged in local projects. The evaluation of the program was extremely positive, and the potential impact is extraordinary.

Accomplishments and Impacts:

Participants in the Georgia Youth Summit learned about the diversity of opportunities and people in Georgia. They also studied the demographics and economic dimensions of our state. They took part in leadership development workshops and activities including managing conflict, stress management, setting personal and group goals, leadership skills and styles, communication, and creating youth/adult partnerships. Roundtable sessions were held on Agriculture & the Environment, Technology, Education, and Healthcare. Each county group of youth and adults also worked as a team to develop plans to return to their community and make recommendations to local decision makers.

Resource Commitment:

The Georgia General Assembly appropriated \$50,000 to assist with the project. These funds included scholarships for all of the 800+ Summit attendees.

Collaborators:

The Georgia Rural Development Council, The Georgia General Assembly, Georgia 4-H State and County Faculty members, the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, and the University of Georgia Fanning Leadership Institute were the collaborators for the project.

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Other Base Program Areas This Program Applies To:

Natural Resources & Environmental Management; Nutrition, Diet, & Health; Community Resources & Economic Development; Agriculture; Leadership & Volunteer Development; Family Development & Resource Management

Alaska

UAF for Youth

Program Description:

Alaska's 4-H program has suffered for four years from a lack of funding and recognition by decision makers at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks and at the state legislature. One of the hardest parts of the program has been to make the connection of the university, Cooperative Extension Service, and 4-H. We created a program called UAF for Youth to help make the connection and over the past two years have chosen two different projects to sponsor.

Stakeholder Satisfaction:

4-H members and leaders have implemented the program in every district of the state. The leaders have taken the lead in carrying out the program in concert with the agents. The University has been satisfied as the 4-H'ers who have addressed the Board of Regents and the Legislature have left a positive image of 4-H, Cooperative Extension, and the University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

Accomplishments and Impacts:

In year one of the program, funds were made available to hire three new extension employees. Two of these were 4-H agents. To do this project, the 4-H'ers helped gather more than 6,000 signatures in support of the University budget and 4-H. The collected signatures in each district were delivered to the airport in unique ways. They used sled dogs, horses, and many other ways to get publicity. Once in Juneau, more than 60 4-H'ers and parents carrying canoes; leading horses, goats, and dogs; and carrying other 4-H projects marched about a mile to the Capitol and delivered the signatures to the Governor, Board of Regents, and Legislature. In the second year, the 4-H program sponsored a bill to reduce liability for livestock owners. The bill received many sponsors and made it through the House of Representatives but got stalled in the Senate. We have assurance it will be passed out of the Senate next year. We sent 22 teens to Juneau along with four adult leaders to lobby the Legislature. After our two days, the Legislature passed a commendation for 4-H teens, with 13 of 20 Senators and 33 of 40 Representatives signing on as cosponsors.

The teens involved in both programs became excellent spokespersons for 4-H and the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. They learned a lot about the Legislature and how to present themselves to legislators. They also found out that well-spoken youth can accomplish a lot of good.

Resource Commitment:

For the first year, CES used about \$1,000 to help five teens and three leaders travel to Juneau to lobby the Legislature.

For the second year, the 4-H'ers raised money to travel to Juneau, and the Dean of the College of Rural Alaska put up \$5,000 to help cover costs.

Collaborators:

Year one was strictly a 4-H program, with some help coming from supporters of 4-H. Dean of the College of Rural Alaska, where Extension is located, has provided more than \$16,000 in travel support over two years. For year two we had the support of Representative John Coghill of North Pole, AK, who helped sponsor the legislation.

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Other Base Program Areas This Program Applies To:

Leadership & Volunteer Development

New Jersey

Students Teaching Students: High School Students As Astronomers

Situation:

Surveys of American adults yield some disturbing statistics on their science literacy. Only 45% of American adults know that the Earth goes around the sun and that it takes a year to do so. When given a calculator, the cost of carpet per square yard, and the room size, only 4% of American adults are able to calculate what it would cost to cover the entire room. Twenty-five percent of adults believe in astrology, and almost 50% think that UFO's are real. These are just a few examples of the state of science literacy in America (see Fraknoi, "Astronomy Education: Current Development, Future Coordination," Astronomical Society of the Pacific Conference Series, 1996, Volume 89, page 9).

Science literacy is important for people to live interesting, responsible, and productive lives in a world that is very dependent on advanced technology — and daily becoming more so. The goal of our program is to help students to gain the knowledge and skills they need to be successful citizens. By getting students interested and "jazzed up" about one field of science — astronomy

— we also give them the tools they need to understand other fields.

Program Description:

The purpose of this program is to have high school students become amateur astronomers and utilize this knowledge to:

- Plan, conduct, implement, and evaluate star programs for the public and for the elementary students.
- Teach astronomy to 4th graders during the spring months.
- Learn to use “StarLab” and give public demonstrations in it.
- Receive paid internships in space and astronomy areas during the summer.

The 4-H astronomy club members at a local high school became amateur astronomers and teachers to a local 4th grade class. They worked with a group of astronomers (amateur astronomers, and graduate and undergraduate astronomy students) and one high school teacher. The club started at the beginning of the school year and met once per week after school with the teacher. The astronomers provided basic astronomy training to the high school students and acted in an advisory capacity throughout the year.

After the completion of their initial training, the high school students organized an evening stargazing party for a group of about 40 elementary school students and their families that was held before the end of the fall semester. During the spring semester, the high school students taught “hands-on” astronomy lessons to the same elementary school students. At the end of the school year, the project team identified internships for the high school students in which they will utilize the skills and knowledge they have acquired to teach astronomy to more than 1,000 youths in informal non-classroom settings. Although this club is in a suburban/rural area, the concept can be utilized in any area.

Stakeholder Satisfaction:

During this first year, the membership in the 4-H club more than doubled to 25 students and the number of students wanting to take the astronomy elective at the high school went from 15 to 50 students. Some of the high school students chose the astronomy club above high school sports. Special-needs students were attracted by the club format. In one case, teachers at the school commented, “This is the first high school activity that this student seems to be excited about in two years.” The mother of this student wrote a letter to the high school teacher after winter break commenting how the astronomy club had contributed to a positive change in attitude and behavior at home. In addition, the elementary school students and their teachers were very excited about having high school students visiting their class.

Accomplishments and Impacts:

The element of youth “teaching what they learned to others,” in this case to elementary school students, has been crucial to the success of this first-year pilot program. Right from the start, it gave the high school students a clear goal. They knew what end result was expected. In addition, because they knew that they had to teach what they learned to the elementary school students, they made sure that they understood every step. Often, the astronomers were asked to come back to explain something in more detail because the students did not feel comfortable yet with the material.

Videotapes of the star-gazing party and teaching have proven very helpful in evaluating the program. The 4th graders' evaluations showed that 100% wanted to learn more about astronomy, and 94% were going to tell someone what they learned. Most importantly, the 4th grade teachers said that the students are excited about the high school students coming in to teach. This has had a positive influence on the elementary school teachers who did more astronomy with their students because of this. These 4-H'ers are truly mentors and role models. Even the parents of the 4th grade students were impressed by the knowledge and abilities of the 4-H'ers. The parents felt that this was one of the best programs and experiences that their children have had.

Resource Commitment:

A \$31,850 Initiative to Develop Education through Astronomy and Space Science (IDEAS) Grant helped to fund this project.

Collaborators:

Collaborators include an astronomer from Columbia University, the director of the Raritan Valley Community College Planetarium, the high school physics teacher, and Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Somerset County.

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Other Base Program Areas This Program Applies To:

Leadership & Volunteer Development

Oklahoma

Discovery Unlimited

Situation:

The idea for Discovery Unlimited was the creation of Oklahoma's 1999 National 4-H Conference delegation. The delegates wanted to create an event that would encourage 11- and 12- year-olds to remain active in 4-H by exposing them to the potential opportunities available to teen members. Discovery Unlimited became an event organized by youth for youth.

Program Description:

The goal of Discovery Unlimited was to create a higher level of enthusiasm, increase retention among teens, and contribute to the development of stronger leaders.

The event was planned, implemented, and evaluated by youth ranging from ages 11 to 19 years old. Youth were selected based on enthusiasm, passion for 4-H, and concern for others. Committee members learned life skills, including working with budgets, public relations, hiring speakers, selecting workshop presenters, and leading group activities. State 4-H staff served as advisors, not coordinators. They kept the youth leadership team focused on delegated tasks.

Youth who attended the activity learned about the full benefits of 4-H — life skills, project knowledge, trips, scholarships, friendships, and fun! The 11- and 12-year-olds were exposed to a variety of state leadership and service programs and opportunities through one-on-one contact with role models such as state and district officers and state ambassadors. County 4-H programs were strengthened because of the non-competitive and relaxed environment with county staff, volunteers, and other youth. Families and communities were strengthened because the program promoted 4-H as a positive alternative to drugs, alcohol, and violence.

Stakeholder Satisfaction:

When participants were asked if they planned to stay involved in 4-H throughout high school, 92% of the delegates answered YES! Comments from evaluations included:

- “I liked it all!”
- “I plan to be very active.”
- “This let me see old and make new friends.”
- “Now I want to do more!”
- “I have seen a lot of opportunities I can get in 4-H!”
- “The awesome counselors inspired me to be like them!”

Accomplishments and Impacts:

A total of 150 youths and adults attended the 2000 Discovery Unlimited, “*Get Hooked On 4-H!*” Eleven youth and two staff served on the planning committee, and 10 state 4-H officers and ambassadors taught workshops and served as counselors.

A total of 173 youths and adults participated in the 2001 Discovery Unlimited, “Blast Off with 4-H...It’s Out of This World!” Twenty-four youth and staff served on the planning committee.

Resource Commitment:

Participants paid \$30 for the overnight experience. The conference was self-supporting.

Collaborators:

The planning committee was comprised of national conference delegates, state ambassadors and officers, past Discovery Unlimited participants, adult 4-H volunteers, and state staff.

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Other Base Program Areas This Program Applies To:

Leadership & Volunteer Development, 4-H/Youth Development

State 4-H Council: Come Together

Program Description:

The Georgia 4-H Board of Directors (nine elected teen officers) determined that the 2001 State 4-H Council meeting would offer the opportunity for delegates to delve in depth into issues facing their communities and determine solutions for these problems. Teen representatives from each county in Georgia (475 total delegates) participated in the conference. The conference included a kickoff motivational speaker, interactive workshops planned by the officers as well as a capnote panel discussion featuring teens and adult stakeholders.

Stakeholder Satisfaction:

The program was coordinated by state 4-H faculty with 30 county faculty members serving as workshop facilitators. Since the workshop included in the program was developed by teens, the participants found the interaction lively and enjoyable. Additionally, the other Council components including speakers and recreational activities were all teen selected leading to a positive response by the participants. While the weekend was a one time conference, the curriculum was shared with county faculty for implementation on the local level.

Accomplishments and Impacts:

4-H'ers identified five key issues facing each community in Georgia prior to the conference (aging populations, at risk youth, character education, elections/voting, and environmental issues) Each delegate selected an issue to work with in teams. During the workshop session, the participants identified solutions for county implementation. An idea bank of more than 25 teen led programs was developed as solutions for the problems. These ideas were shared with not only the Council participants but also stakeholders in these issues. The sharing of teen generated ideas reinforced the ideas and commitment of the power of youth in that teens are and can be positive change agents in communities.

The teens involved stated Council as one of their favorite activities of the year. The five adults representing the issues consistently identified the ideas and contributions of the teens as "some of the strongest most positive ideas to date." Several of the project ideas have been led in communities thus indicating the successes of the program.

Resource Commitment:

The user fees for the conference offset all costs. Additionally, the kickoff speaker made a contribution of his fee so that he was of no cost to the program. The workshop materials were funded from conference fees with the curriculum being developed in partnership with the officers and a 4-H faculty member.

Collaborators:

In addition to the partnership of 4-H members (teens) working with faculty in development and implementation of the program, representatives from agencies working with populations effected

by the agency participated. These included representatives from the Environmental Education Coalition, CYFAR, Kids Vote in Georgia, Character Education Coalition and Elder Care and Lifestyle Programs.

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Other base program areas this program applies to

Community Resource & Economic Development, Leadership & Volunteer Development

Maryland

DAD’S Make A Difference

Situation:

Preventing teenagers from having unplanned pregnancies is important because teen pregnancy often diminishes the opportunities of both the children and the young mothers. The children born to teenagers have a lower probability of obtaining the emotional and financial resources they need to develop into independent, productive, and well-adjusted adults. Thus, babies born to young teens reflect a group of children who will have to overcome high odds to thrive. Data indicates Maryland’s teenage birth rate ranks 25th nationally. (Source: Anne E. Casey Foundation, Kids Count Data Book, 2001)

To address this problem, in 1999 The Maryland Department of Human Resources, Child Support Enforcement Administration (DHR, CSEA) awarded a five- year grant to the Maryland Cooperative Extension, University of Maryland, College Park and Eastern Shore to implement the Dads Make A Difference Program (DMAD). DMAD is a paternity education program that gives teenagers the opportunity to discuss and examine the important role of fathers in the lives of their children; the legal, financial and emotional responsibilities of parenting; and to prevent early fatherhood. The program was originated, tested, and implemented by the University of Minnesota Extension Service and the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Child Support Enforcement Division.

Program Description:

Dads Make A Difference is a paternity education program which uses a cross-age teaching model of older teens, male and females, ages 16 to 18, teaching middle school- age youth. DMAD curriculum help youth develop “life skills”. The curriculum consists of activities that help youth build decision-making skills, set goals for their lives, and understand the consequences of entering into parenthood before they are financially or emotionally ready. These activities often include role-playing exercises in which youth act out various situations they might encounter.

Stakeholder Satisfaction:

The Maryland Department of Human Resources, Child Support Enforcement Administration is interested in the implementation of DMAD because the program goals are central to their

mission, which includes paternity acknowledgment. The Maryland Cooperative Extension is interested in conducting the program because 4-H Youth Development shares the goals of the program and has the expertise and experience in working successfully with Maryland youth.

The participants in the program have gained knowledge in defining paternity, and understanding the importance of fathers in children's lives. The program gives the participants the opportunity to develop life skills, explore life options, and motivate them to avoid early childbearing.

Accomplishments and Impacts:

To date, 29 adults and 142 teens have been trained in the DMAD'S curriculum. These teens have taught the program to 629 middle school-age youth from culturally, geographically and economically diverse counties and Baltimore City.

Formal evaluations were conducted by Elaine A. Anderson, Ph.D., Department of Family Studies, University of Maryland, College Park to determine the impact of the program and to shape the program to increase its effectiveness. The teen participants reported the most important things learned from the training were, the importance of fathers and their roles with their children, how important it is to wait for responsibility and independence before you have sex, the importance of making the right decision in order to not mess up the future, the great responsibility for having a child, and finally the teens reported learning skills to be leaders/teachers themselves.

Resource Commitment:

Maryland Department of Human Resources awarded a five-year grant. In year one the grant total was \$305,393. The award to Maryland Cooperative Extension from DHR for the subsequent years will total \$789,831. Maryland Cooperative Extension provides 34% of the total cost in matching funds.

Collaborators:

Baltimore City MCE:	Zion AMC Church Teen Youth Group and Fellowship of Lights Youth and Community Services
Frederick County MCE:	Frederick City Youth Center, Ft. Detrick Children and Youth, County Health Department, Reasonable Father's Coordinator, MD Sheriff's Youth Ranch, Simpson Community Church, Frederick News Post
Prince George's County MCE:	Prince George's County Government, Maryland Park and Planning Community Centers, Board of Education, and First Baptist Church of Glenarden Community Center

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Other base program areas this program applies to:

Leadership & Volunteer Development, Family Development & Resource Management

You CAN Make a Difference

Situation:

The need for food is so high that Maryland food shelters had to turn away 6,259 individuals because of lack of food last year. This is a serious problem that faces all Maryland's young and old, and it must be confronted. To make sure that no child, teenager, adult, or senior citizen in Maryland should have to wonder where he/she will find the next meal, there is a need for a safety net of service providers to feed the hungry.

Program Description:

To raise awareness around the state about the serious problem of hunger, the Allegany County 4-H Program through its volunteers and club members participated in a variety of activities to make others aware of hunger issues in our communities and to get others involved in a crusade against hunger.

Stakeholder Satisfaction:

A state 4-H in-service training for extension educators was held to raise awareness about the problems of hunger and acquire materials to conduct a simulation game and gain knowledge of how to use it with volunteers, 4-H members, and other audiences. Training was held for 25 adults and teen volunteers in Allegany County. In a simulation exercise, each participant became a person suffering from hunger. This role playing session was followed by discussion with expressions from both adult and teens about how frustrating and degrading it is to be hungry and in need of food and what could be done about the situation. Participants gained a better understanding of hunger and its many causes. These adult and teen volunteers then used the activity at a club meeting to raise awareness about how important it is to become involved in feeding the hungry.

Accomplishments and Impacts:

4-H clubs are collecting food throughout the year to support and stock food pantry shelves. A food drive was conducted at the County Fair making more people aware of the need. One 4-H club has collected over 250 pounds of food and donated it to a domestic violence center and a homeless center. The local food pantry received the 130 items from the County Fair collection. Teens have also taken the idea to the State 4-H Teen Council to actively participate in the statewide 4-H Feeding the Hungry project initiated in the spring of 2001.

Some comments from participants about the simulation game:

"I learned what it was like for people who didn't have enough money to feed themselves."

"I learned we should be thankful for what we have. Financial assistance is very hard to get."

"Treat people with respect."

Collaborators:

Maryland Food Bank and Capital Area Food Bank

Maryland State 4-H Teen Council

Allegany County 4-H Program

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Other base program areas this program applies to

Leadership and Volunteer Development, Nutrition, Diet and Health, Community Resource & Economic Development

Mississippi

Congressional Award Program

Situation:

There is a need to:

Encourage youth to set goals and take the necessary actions to achieve those goals;

Involve youth in community service so that they are aware of the benefits and rewards of giving back to others;

Teach youth the benefits of physical fitness so that they will establish healthy habits for a lifetime; and

Create an awareness of the importance of the environment for the future of our world.

Program Description:

MSU Extension offered in-service training to 4-H Agents and Volunteer 4-H Leaders on the benefits of the National Congressional Award Program and how it can be integrated into 4-H club and project activities. The Congressional Award Program is a Federal program established by Congress that recognizes outstanding youth. Goals are set by youth in four project areas: community service, personal development, physical fitness and expedition/exploration. These areas fit perfectly with the 4-H program. Information about the program was dispersed to youth throughout the state. 4-H agents and volunteers worked closely with youth and parents to set goals and then follow up at a later date with documentation of the hours of service in each of the four areas. In many cases group activities for community service, camp outs and other educational events were held so that there would be an abundance of opportunities for youth to become involved. This not only benefited the youth who participated but many lives were touched by the care and concern demonstrated through the actions of these youth.

Stakeholder Satisfaction:

There was a massive commitment to the involvement of youth in community service, personal development, physical fitness and expedition/ exploration from a grass roots level. Volunteers, teachers, community leaders, 4-H Agents and Extension leadership were dedicated to reaching youth in Mississippi with this opportunity.

Accomplishments and Impacts:

Many excellent programs providing opportunities for youth to participate in community service were established. A few examples are:

- Pet Therapy with Senior Citizens
- Clowning to bring laughter to those in the hospital
- After school tutoring
- Technology training for the elderly

One hundred and ninety-seven Mississippi 4-Hers received the Bronze and Silver Awards. Out of 102 youth receiving the Gold Medal at the June 2001 National Ceremony in Washington D.C., seven were 4-Hers from Mississippi.

Many recipients have also received scholarships and one Tupelo 4-Her traveled to China as a Youth Ambassador. The program is growing rapidly. More adults and youth are becoming involved and excited each day.

Collaborators:

MSU Extension Service, 4-H Agents, North Mississippi Public Schools, Union County Development Association, Home School Association, North Mississippi Banks, North Mississippi Civic Clubs, Mississippi Media, Verona Petting Zoo, Lov A Pet, Union County Leadership Association

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Other base program areas this program applies to

Community Resource & Economic Development, Leadership & Volunteer Development
Nutrition, Diet and Health, 4-H Youth Development

New Jersey

4-H Rabbit, Cavy And Small Animal Show Planning Committee Involves Teens

Situation:

State 4-H Animal Shows are an opportunity for 4-H'ers to display with pride to the general public their accomplishments (i.e. raising a healthy animal) during the 4-H Project year. Involving teens in planning the activity and encouraging them to take active leadership roles enhances the learning experience by providing them with the opportunity to develop leadership skills and make suggestions of how to improve the activity.

Program Description:

During the 4-H Project year one of the responsibilities of the New Jersey State 4-H Small Animal Advisory Committee is to plan the State 4-H Rabbit, Cavy, and Small Animal Show. This advisory committee is composed of 4-H teen and adult volunteers (Atlantic, Hunterdon, Monmouth, Ocean, Somerset Counties) and 4-H professional and paraprofessional staff (Passaic, Monmouth, Ocean Counties) from throughout New Jersey. While discussing plans for the 2000 State Show, the Ocean County representatives suggested instituting a Showmanship Division similar to the Showmanship Division in their county. At the next State 4-H Small Animal Advisory Committee meeting a teen from Ocean County made a presentation explaining the public speaking and educational value of instituting a Showmanship Division at the State Show. The advisory committee overwhelmingly accepted the proposal and Ocean County volunteered to plan and implement the Showmanship Division at the State Show. At this same meeting a teen from Monmouth County volunteered to coordinate the registrations of all the rabbit & cavy entries. The adult who volunteered to coordinate the small animal (gerbils, hamsters, mice, etc.) entries has volunteered for this responsibility since she joined the advisory committee as a teen.

Stakeholder Satisfaction:

Of the participants completing the evaluation for the 2000 State Show:

- 100% indicated they enjoyed the show (30% specifically mentioned their approval of the Showmanship Division.)
- 76% felt the show was a valuable learning experience for the 4-H Youth (30% specifically mentioned the Showmanship Division.)

Accomplishments and Impacts:

45 4-H'ers from 8 Counties with a total of 117 animals participated in the State Show.
30 4-H'ers participated in the Showmanship Division.

Resource Commitment:

Flemington Fair provided the facility and ribbons. Hunterdon County 4-H volunteers set up the facility for the Show. 4-H youth volunteers conducted a fund-raising activity and made arrangements for donations to purchase trophies. A 4-H Professional and two 4-H Paraprofessionals provided guidance to the volunteers.

Collaborators:

Department of 4-H Youth Development, Rutgers Cooperative Extension, Flemington Fair Association, Flemington, New Jersey, Macy Compton, Monmouth County 4-H Program Assistant, Helen Ferraro, Ocean County 4-H Program Assistant

Contact Person(s):

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Other base program areas this program applies to:

Agriculture, Leadership & Volunteer Development

4-H Teen Council Sponsors Shopping Day For Limited Resource Families

Situation:

Although some families with limited resources receive some charitable contributions during the holiday season, they rarely have the opportunity to select gifts themselves that they can give to their children. The 4-H Shopping Day event gives parents an opportunity to select gifts appropriate for their children *and* offers them the satisfaction of being able to give the gifts to the children themselves during the holidays, something many other parents take for granted.

Many teens are unaware of the needs of others in their community. This event gives teens the opportunity to learn about the hardships faced by those in need, and to experience the satisfaction of giving back to the community. Involvement in the planning and implementation of the event also builds an awareness of the many organizations serving those with limited resources and the large number of families in the community who are in need.

Program Description:

The 2000 4-H Holiday Shopping Day for Limited Resource Families was initiated, planned, implemented and evaluated by the Middlesex County 4-H Teen Council. Teens assessed the need for this program, and acted on it. Contacts were made through the 4-H and EFNEP staff to agencies in urban and suburban areas in the county that serve limited resource families. Clients from these organizations were invited to the Shopping Day event, and free bus transportation was donated for parents who did not have transportation of their own. Teen Council members made contacts with local businesses and regional companies to request donations of new clothing, toys, games, wrapping paper, refreshments and other items for the event. Grants were written by Teen Council members, in cooperation with 4-H staff to various community and state organizations. Teens also used fund raising events such as t-shirt sales, and County Fair activities to raise money for the Shopping Day. Two months prior to the event, teens began sorting donations received and worked to create a shopping list for the ages of the children being served. With funds raised, teens purchased clothing and toys for the children. At the event, teens organized refreshments, a free gift wrap station, set up child care for parents who brought their children, and put together goodie bags and organized games and a visit with Santa Claus for the kids. Parents attending the event were helped by teens and adult volunteers (from 4-H clubs) to find gifts for their children. Parents were also able to choose from additional small items at a “freebie table” to use as stocking-stuffers or small gifts.

Stakeholder Satisfaction:

This is the fourth year that this event has been conducted, indicating a need in the community. The teens report that this is their “favorite” community service activity, and it has the highest attendance of any Teen Council event. Teen members are involved in the Shopping Day project year round and are responsible for working with adult advisors and 4-H staff to create an action plan for the event.

All members contribute in some way to the event, either through serving on a committee to solicit donations, helping with the shopping for the event, or by helping with set up and on the actual day of the event. Following the event, verbal and written evaluations are conducted. Overall evaluations from teens indicate that they receive a strong sense of satisfaction by being involved in the event, and feel that they are making a positive contribution to the community. Teens report “this project makes you realize how lucky you are, and that there are a lot of people that don’t have things that easy.” Other teens reported that “this is what 4-H is all about and what people need to see;” and “it’s nice to do something *real* to help someone and know they really appreciate and enjoy your help.”

Accomplishments and Impact:

The 2000 Holiday Shopping Day event reached approximately 175 youth from nine different agencies in Middlesex County that serve limited resource families. The agencies included a shelter for battered women and children, a shelter for families, welfare-to-work agencies, drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs, a program for pregnant teens, and programs serving homeless women and families. Through the efforts of Teen Council members, approximately \$2500 was raised through grants, in-kind contributions and donations of items needed for the event. An additional \$500 was raised by teens through various fund-raisers held throughout the year. Due to the previous year’s publicity of the event, 4-H families and volunteers from the Edison Center for Community Renewal offered to help on the day of the event. Results of verbal and written evaluations of the parents attending the event were positive. Parents comments included the following: “It was nice to have something for my daughter to open during the holidays and it was nice for her to see Santa Claus;” “I didn’t have any money to get my kids anything, so it helped and the people who helped at the event were really nice;” “That was a beautiful thing (you) did and I pray that you are able to continue doing this and that it expands.”

Resource Commitment:

External funds were generated from Youth in Action/Community Service Grant from Metropolitan Life (\$500), New Jersey 4-H Development Fund Grant (\$500), Edison Center for Community Renewal Mini-Grant (\$300). In addition, donations of merchandise and gift certificates were received from local bakeries, Bristol-Meyers Squibb, L’Oreal, McDonalds, convenience stores, local clothing stores, Heidi Candy, Waldenbooks and other local businesses.

Collaborators:

Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Middlesex County, Middlesex County Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, Edison Center for Community Renewal, FISH Hospitality Program (Piscataway), Women Aware, Inc. (New Brunswick), Browntown Bus Service (bus transportation), and various corporations and local businesses (see above).

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Other base program areas this program applies to

Leadership and Volunteer Development

Food And Fiber Systems – Youth Teaching Youth

Situation:

As New Jersey becomes more urbanized, people become less knowledgeable about agricultural production, processing, marketing, distribution, regulation or research (i.e., Food and Fiber Systems). This lack of understanding makes it difficult for an individual to make an informed decision pertaining to the impact Food and Fiber Systems have on their daily lives. In addition, there is a need to promote the agriculture industry and its benefits in such a highly urbanized state.

Program Description:

In a train-the-trainer approach, the County 4-H Agents from Passaic and Sussex Counties utilized lecture, demonstration, role playing and question and answer techniques to train high school students to teach elementary school students about the importance of the Food and Fiber System, including production, distribution and use of agricultural products.

Stakeholder Satisfaction:

Verbal feedback from the 4th grade teachers indicated the high school students were very effective instructors.

The high school students reported a stronger appreciation for science, agriculture, and effective teaching techniques.

The teacher of the high school students indicated this program was "an excellent enrichment activity" and "the added advantage of exposing students to the teaching process as a career possibility."

In addition, based upon the success of this program, a grant for \$1000 was received from the New Jersey 4-H Development Fund to continue the project.

Accomplishments and Impacts:

8 high school students taught 60 4th graders.

Actual quotes from the high school students evaluation of the program:

" I learned a lot about agriculture that I didn't know"

" ... we must include agriculture in the space we have."

" ... I am now more aware and interested in what I eat and how much I eat. I think more information like this should be taught in schools."

" I have a new appreciation for agriculture. I don't think I really understood how it and biology affect everything around me."

" ... it should be repeated. It was fun for the kids [4th graders] and the high school students. We both learned something new."

Resource Commitment

Newton High School provided support through the efforts of a teacher who assisted with the recruitment of high school students for this program and served a mentor for these students. Rutgers Cooperative Extension provided training materials and staff to conduct training.

Collaborators

Mary Ann Schoettly, Science Teacher at Newton High School, Newton, New Jersey
Principal & 4th Grade Teachers at Merriam Avenue School, Newton, New Jersey
Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Passaic and Sussex Counties

Contact Person(s)

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Other base program areas this program applies to

Agriculture, Leadership & Volunteer Development
